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The Influence of Influencers and Social Media on Arei Buying Decision Through Customer Trust

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of influencers and social media on buying decisions of Arei Outdoor Gear with customer trust as a mediating variable among outdoor enthusiasts in DKI Jakarta. This research is motivated by the increasing use of social media and influencer marketing strategies in digital marketing, while studies examining customer trust as a mediating variable in local outdoor equipment industries remain limited. This research employed a quantitative approach with a causal design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 210 respondents who had purchased Arei Outdoor Gear products in DKI Jakarta. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Square (SmartPLS 4.1.3) to test both direct and indirect relationships between variables. The results indicate that influencers have a positive and significant effect on customer trust and purchasing decisions. Social media positively influences customer trust; however, its indirect effect on purchasing decisions through customer trust is not significant. Furthermore, customer trust significantly influences purchasing decisions and mediates the relationship between influencers and purchasing decisions. These findings highlight that customer trust plays an important role in strengthening influencer marketing effectiveness in encouraging purchasing decisions for Arei Outdoor Gear products. This study provides implications for digital marketing strategies, particularly in improving customer trust through credible influencers to enhance consumer purchasing decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital economy in recent years has brought significant changes to consumer behavior in Indonesia. The increasing penetration of the internet and the use of social media make it easier for people to get information about a product before making a purchase. Social media no longer only serves as a means of communication, but also develops into an effective marketing medium for companies in reaching consumers widely and building long-term relationships. This change encourages companies to utilize digital marketing strategies, one of which is through the use of influencers which are considered to be able to influence consumer perception and purchasing decisions more effectively than conventional marketing methods.

Influencers are individuals who have the ability to influence the audience through content shared on social media. The trust formed between influencers and their followers makes product recommendations more convincing so that they can drive buying decisions. In addition, social media also allows companies to build two-way communication with consumers through commenting, content sharing, and other interactions that can increase customer engagement with a brand. This condition makes influencers and social media an important factor in building customer trust and influencing consumer purchasing decisions

The outdoor equipment industry in Indonesia has also experienced quite rapid growth in recent years. Based on the results of observations from 2022 to 2023 on Arei Outdoor Gear, Eiger, and Consina products on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia, it can be seen that the demand for outdoor activity equipment shows a positive trend. In addition, Google Trends data shows that searches related to natural activities have tripled since 2021. This shows that public interest in outdoor activities is increasing, creating a huge market opportunity for outdoor equipment companies, including Arei Outdoor Gear.

Arei Outdoor Gear is one of the local Indonesian brands engaged in outdoor activity equipment and has a fairly wide market in Indonesia. In the face of increasingly fierce competition, companies need to implement effective marketing strategies to attract consumers' attention. One strategy that can be used is the use of influencers and social media in building customer trust and improving purchasing decisions. Customer trust is an important factor because consumers tend to buy products from brands that are considered to have credibility and good reputation. Therefore, companies need to build customer trust through the right digital marketing strategy.

Although marketing through social media and influencers has been widely discussed in various studies, most of the previous research has still focused on the fashion, cosmetics, and fast food industries. Research on the outdoor equipment industry, especially on local brands such as Arei Outdoor Gear, is still relatively limited. In addition, previous research has tended to examine the influence of influencers or social media separately, without considering customer trust as a mediating variable linking the two to purchasing decisions. This condition shows that there is a research gap that needs to be studied further. Some previous studies have also shown that social media plays a role in building brand appeal, while influencer credibility has an effect on consumer buying interest, but there is still limited research that specifically examines the role of customer trust in the context of outdoor products.

In addition, there are still several problems found in Arei Outdoor Gear's digital marketing, including limited research examining the influence of influencers and social media on local outdoor brands, the unclear role of customer trust as a mediating variable, and the lack of optimal strategies for using influencers in building long-term relationships with customers. In addition, the influence of digital marketing activities on the formation of customer trust has also not been fully understood. These problems show the importance of further research to find out the factors that influence consumer buying decisions on the Arei Outdoor Gear brand.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the influence of influencers and social media on buying decisions with customer trust as a mediating variable in the Arei Outdoor Gear Brand. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of marketing management science, especially in the field of digital marketing and consumer behavior. In addition, this research is also expected to provide practical benefits for companies in designing more effective digital marketing strategies through the selection of the right influencers and the optimization of the use of social media to increase customer trust and consumer purchasing decisions.

Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of influencers and social media in building customer trust and encouraging consumer purchasing decisions in the outdoor equipment industry, especially the Arei Outdoor Gear Brand in the DKI Jakarta area. The results of this research are also expected to be a reference for future research in developing more effective digital marketing models in similar industries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencing

Influencers are individuals who have the ability to influence consumer opinions, attitudes, and behaviors through social media. In the digital era, influencers are one of the effective marketing strategies because they are able to build more personal and interactive communication with the audience. Influencers can increase a brand's credibility through the experience, knowledge, and product recommendations they share with their followers. The higher the credibility of an influencer, the greater its influence on consumer perception and trust in a product.

In the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), influencers can influence subjective norms and consumer attitudes towards a product. When consumers see influencers, they trust using or recommending certain products, consumers will have a positive perception and increase the intention to make a purchase. In addition, influencers also play a role in building an emotional connection with the audience so that they can increase customer trust in the brand. Previous research has shown that influencer credibility has a positive influence on customer trust and consumer purchasing decisions (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023).

Social Media

Social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact, share information, and build communication online. Social media has become one of the effective marketing tools because it allows companies to reach consumers widely and quickly. In addition, social media also provides opportunities for consumers to obtain product information, read reviews, and interact directly with companies and other users.

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), social media can influence consumers' attitudes and intentions in making purchases. Information conveyed through social media can form a positive perception of the product so as to increase customer trust. In addition, easy access to information through social media can also increase consumer confidence in making buying decisions. Previous research has shown that marketing through social media has a significant effect on customer trust and consumer purchasing decisions (Hanaysha, 2022).

Customer Trust

Customer trust is the consumer's belief in a product or brand that it can meet their needs and expectations. Customer trust is an important factor in building a long-term relationship between a company and consumers. Without trust, consumers tend to be hesitant to make a purchase of a product.

In consumer behavior theory, customer trust is formed through experience, information, and recommendations from other parties. Influencers and social media are sources of information that can increase customer trust in products. When consumers get positive information from influencers and social media, the level of trust in brands will increase. Previous research has shown that customer trust has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions (Luo et al., 2025).

Buying Decision

Purchasing decisions are the process that consumers make in choosing and buying a product based on certain needs and considerations. The Buying Decisions process starts from the identification of needs, information search, alternative evaluation, buying decisions, to post-purchase behavior.

Purchasing decisions are influenced by various factors such as product information, recommendations, and the level of customer trust in the brand. In the context of digital marketing, influencers and social media are important factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to choose products that are recommended by trusted influencers and have positive reviews on social media. Previous research has shown that influencers and social media have a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions (Afandi et al., 2021).

Hypothesis Development

Influencer is one of the digital marketing strategies that is able to build customer trust through their credibility and experience. In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), influencers can influence subjective norms and consumer attitudes towards products. Previous research has shown that influencer credibility has a positive effect on customer trust. Therefore, the higher the credibility of the influencer, the higher the customer's trust in the product being promoted (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Influencers have a positive effect on customer trust.

Social media makes it easier for consumers to obtain information and interact with companies. In TPB, easy access to information through social media can increase consumers' positive attitudes towards products. Previous research has shown that social media has a positive effect on customer trust. Therefore, the more effective the use of social media, the higher customer trust in the product (Hanaysha, 2022). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2: Social media has a positive effect on customer trust.

Influencers have the ability to shape consumer perception of a product. Recommendations from influencers can increase interest and encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that influencers have a positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions (Afandi et al., 2021). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: Influencers have a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Social media makes it easier for consumers to obtain product information so as to influence purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that social media has a positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions (Hanaysha, 2022). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H4: Social media has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

Customer trust is an important factor in driving buying decisions. Consumers who have a high level of trust in the product tend to have an easier time making purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that customer trust has a positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions (Luo et al., 2025). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H5: Customer trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

Influencers can increase customer trust which in turn drives consumer purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that customer trust is able to mediate the relationship between influencers and purchasing decisions (Abdul Aziz et al., 2023). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H6: Customer trust mediates the influence of influencers on purchasing decisions.

Social media can increase customer trust through the information conveyed to consumers. Customer trust then encourages consumers to make purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that customer trust mediates the relationship between social media and purchasing decisions (Hanaysha, 2022). Based on previous theories and research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H7: Customer trust mediates the influence of social media on buying decisions.

Conceptual Framework

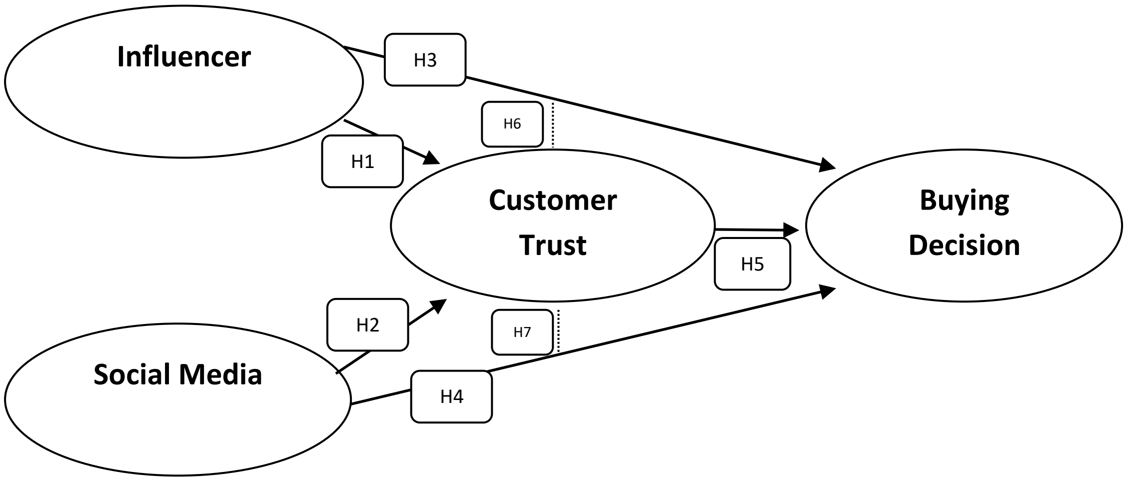

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual framework of research that shows the relationship between influencers and social media on purchasing decisions with customer trust as a mediating variable. Influencers and social media have a direct influence on purchasing decisions as well as an indirect influence through customer trust. Customer trust plays a role as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between influencers and social media on purchasing decisions.

Thus, this study examines the direct influence of influencers and social media on buying decisions as well as indirect influence through customer trust as a mediating variable

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explain the causal relationship between influencers and social media on buying decisions with customer trust as a mediating variable in consumers of the Arei Outdoor Gear Brand in the DKI Jakarta area. This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal research design. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to empirically analyze the cause-and-effect relationship between independent variables, mediating variables, and dependent variables. The research data was collected through a structured survey using a questionnaire to respondents who had purchased Arei Outdoor Gear products both through offline stores and online platforms in the DKI Jakarta area which includes Central Jakarta, North Jakarta, West Jakarta, South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and Thousand Islands. Data collection will be carried out in May 2025. The quantitative approach is used because the data obtained is in the form of numbers that are analyzed to identify the relationships between variables objectively and measurably.

The population in this study is consumers who know and have experience or interest in Arei Outdoor Gear Brand products in the DKI Jakarta area. This study uses a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. The respondent criteria in this study include individuals who know the Arei Outdoor Gear Brand, have seen promotions through influencers and social media, and have experience or interest in buying outdoor products. The purposive sampling technique is used so that the respondents obtained are in accordance with the required characteristics so that the results of the study can describe the actual conditions.

The number of samples in this study is determined based on the provisions of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which suggests that the number of samples should be at least 5–10 times the number of research indicators (Hair et al., 2010). Based on the number of research indicators as many as 21 indicators, the minimum number of samples needed is 210 respondents. In addition, Hair et al. (2010) also stated that the ideal number of samples in SEM research ranges from 100 to 200 respondents. To improve the accuracy of the research results and meet the feasibility of structural model analysis, this study used as many as 210 respondents in accordance with the research criteria. The research data was collected through a Likert scale questionnaire on a scale of 1–6, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1. Contains a List of Variables and Indicators used in this Study

Variabel	Indicator	Source
Customer Trust (Z)	1. Benevolence (sincerity) 2. Ability 3. Integrity(integritas) 4. Wilingess to depend	Kotler and Keller (2016:225)
Buying Decision (Y)	1. Product selection 2. Time of purchase 3. Consumers must choose a distributor 4. Purchase amount 5. Payment Methods	(Kotler dan Armstrong, 2012)
Influencing (X1)	1. Relatability 2. Knowledge 3. Helfulness 4. Confidence 5. Articulation	Forbes (2016:80)
Social Media (X2)	1. Hastag 2. Location/geotagged	Dwight Atmoko (2012:28-63)

	3. Follow 4. Share 5. Like 6. Comments 7. Mention	

Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software version 4.1.3. This method is used to test the direct and indirect relationships between variables in the research model. The analysis stages include descriptive statistical analysis to describe the characteristics of the respondents, external model testing to test the validity and reliability of the construct, and inner model testing to test the causal relationship between variables based on path coefficient values, R-square values, and bootstrapping significance. The PLS-SEM method was chosen because it is able to analyze complex research models and can be used on medium sample sizes.

This research model examines the direct influence of influencers and social media on customer trust and buying decisions. In addition, this study also examines the influence of customer trust on buying decisions and the role of customer trust as a mediating variable between influencers and social media on buying decisions. The structural equation model in this study is formulated as follows:

Model 1 was used to test the influence of influencers and social media on customer trust

$$CT = a + \beta 1I + \beta 2SM + \varepsilon 1$$

Model 2 is used to test the influence of influencers, social media, and customer trust on purchasing decisions

$$BD = a + \beta 3I + \beta 4SM + \beta 5CT + \beta 6ICT + \beta 7SMCT + \varepsilon 2$$

Description:
I = Influencer
SM = Social Media
CT = Customer Trust
BD = Buying Decision
β = Regression coefficient
ε = Error

Hypothesis testing was carried out using T-statistic values and P-values through the bootstrapping process on SmartPLS. The significance levels used in this study are 1%, 5%, and 10% to determine whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in table 2 show that the majority of respondents by gender were Male: out of 210 respondents, 115 (54.8%) were Male and 95

(45.2%) were Female. This shows that male respondents are more involved in this study than female respondents.

Table 2 Characteristics of Respondents

Features	Quantity	Presentase
Gender		
Women	95	54,8%
Male	115	45,2%
Age		
18 - 24 Years	201	95,7%
24 – 35 Years	9	4,3%
35 – 44 Years	0	0%
> 45 Years	0	0%
Education		
High School / Equivalent	187	89%
D3	6	2,9%
S1	16	7,6%
S2	1	0,5%
S3	0	0%
Final Education		
Students	185	88%
Private Employees	20	9,5%
Civil Servant	0	0%
Self-employed	1	0,5%
Entrepreneurship	1	0,5
Students	1	0,5
Internship	1	0,5
Others	1	0,5%
Domicile		
South Jakarta	85	40,5%
East Jakarta	12	5,7%
North Jakarta	3	1,4%
West Jakarta	12	5,7%
Central Jakarta	98	46,7%
Thousand Islands	0	0%
Revenue		
< Rp.1,000,000	118	56,2%
IDR 1,000,000 - IDR 3,000,000	67	31,9%
IDR 3,000,000 - IDR 5,000,000	23	11%
IDR 5,000,000 - IDR 7,000,000	2	1%
Marital Status		
Married	4	1,9%
Unmarried	206	98,1%

The results showed that the age, the majority of respondents were in the 18–24 age range of 95.7%, which shows that the respondents are dominated by the active and productive young generation. Judging from education, most of the respondents had a high school education/equivalent at 89%, and were dominated by students as much as 88%, thus showing that the majority of respondents were still at the educational stage and had characteristics as active users of social media. Based on domicile, the most respondents came from Central Jakarta at 46.7% and South Jakarta at 40.5%, which shows that respondents are dominated by urban communities. In terms of income, the majority of respondents had an income of less than IDR 1,000,000 at 56.2%, which is in line with the dominance of respondents with student status. Meanwhile, based on marital status, most respondents were unmarried at 98.1%. Overall, the characteristics of the respondents in this study are dominated by the younger generation, have student status, are domiciled in urban areas, and have relatively low incomes, which reflects the consumer group who actively use social media and have the potential to be influenced by influencers in shaping customer trust and buying decisions.

Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

The results of the outer model test showed that all research indicators had an outer loading value above 0.70, thus meeting the convergence validity criteria. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value in each construct is also above 0.50, which indicates that the variable is able to adequately explain the variance of the indicator. The reliability test showed that the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values on the entire construct were above 0.70, so it can be concluded that the research instrument is reliable. In addition, the results of the discriminant validity test through the Fornell–Larcker and HTMT criteria show that each construct has clear differences and there is no problem of multicollinearity between variables.

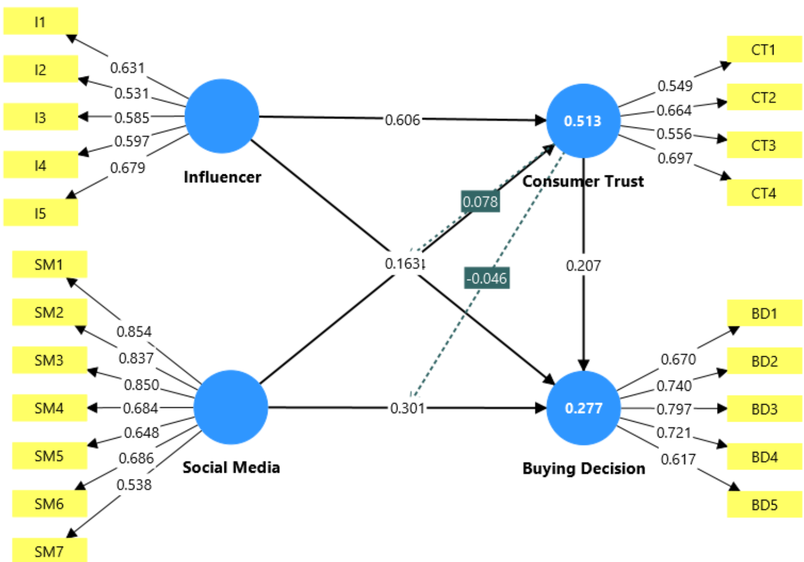

Figure 2. Smart PLS Outdoor Model Measurement Visualization

Figure 2 presents the results of the outer loading test for all research indicators. The convergent validity test was carried out using a minimum outer loading limit of 0.50. Based on the test results, all indicators in each variable have an outer loading value above the set limit, so that no indicators are eliminated from the model. This shows that all indicators are able to adequately represent the measured construct and that the measurement model is declared valid for use in subsequent analysis. Table 3 presents the findings from the validity and reliability review.

Tabel 3. Outer Loading

Variabel	**Indicator**	**Outer Loading**	**Remarks**
***Influencer* (I)**	I1	0.631	Valid
	I2	0.531	Valid
	I3	0.585	Valid
	I4	0.597	Valid
	I5	0.679	Valid
***Social Media* (SM)**	SM1	0.854	Valid
	SM2	0.837	Valid
	SM3	0.850	Valid
	SM4	0.684	Valid
	SM5	0.648	Valid
	SM6	0.686	Valid
	SM7	0.538	Valid
***Customer Trust* (CT)**	CT1	0.549	Valid
	CT2	0.664	Valid
	CT3	0.556	Valid
	CT4	0.697	Valid
***Buying Decision* (BD)**	BD1	0.670	Valid
	BD2	0.740	Valid
	BD3	0.797	Valid
	BD4	0.721	Valid
	BD5	0.617	Valid

The discriminant validity test is carried out to ensure that each research model structure has clear differences and does not overlap with each other. The Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell Larcker Criterion are used to test the construct. If the HTMT value is below the tolerance limit (≤ 0.90) and the square root value of AVE (√AVE) is greater than the correlation between constructs, the construct is considered to meet discriminant validity. The entire latent variable has the ability to describe specifically measured ideas and can be used in future structural analyses if both criteria are met.

Tabel 4 HTMT and Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Buying Decision	***Customer Trust***	***Influencing***	***Social Media***
Buying	**0.712**	**0.666**	**0.570**	**0.517**

Decision				
Customer Trust	***0.414***	***0.620***	***1.350***	***0.801***
Influencing	***0.406***	***0.702***	***0.607***	***0.749***
Social Media	***0.466***	***0.508***	***0.551***	***0.737***

The results of the discriminant validity test based on the Fornell–Larcker criteria showed that the square root value of AVE in each construct was greater than the correlation between other constructs. The square root value of AVE for each variable is Buying Decision of 0.712, customer trust of 0.620, Influencer of 0.607, and Social Media of 0.737. This condition shows that each construct has a good ability to distinguish itself from other constructs, so that the criteria of discriminant validity based on Fornell–Larcker have been met.

In addition, based on the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test, most of the relationship values between constructs were below the recommended limit (< 0.90). However, there is one construct pair, namely customer trust and Influencer, which shows an HTMT value of 1,350. This value indicates a fairly high conceptual proximity between the two variables, which is theoretically still acceptable because the role of influencers is often closely related to the formation of customer trust. Overall, the results of the discriminatory validity test show that the measurement model in this study is still declared feasible and can be used for further analysis.

Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

Internal model testing is carried out to evaluate the relationships between constructs within the research framework as well as assess the suitability of the model before hypothesis testing. The results of the goodness of fit evaluation showed that the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value was 0.116, which was below the limit of 0.08, thus indicating that the research model had a good level of conformity with empirical data. Furthermore, the results of the determination coefficient (R^2) test showed that the Customer Trust variable had an R^2 value of 0.513 which means that 51.3% of the variation in buying interest could be explained by the Influencer and Social Media variables, while the remaining 48.7% were influenced by other factors outside the research model. Meanwhile, the Buying Decision variable had an R^2 value of 0.277, indicating that 27.7% of the variation in buying decisions could be explained by variables in the model, including the mediating role of buying interest, while the remaining 72.3% were influenced by external factors that were not studied. Overall, the SRMR and R^2 values obtained showed that the structural model in this study was of good quality and suitable for further analysis.

This study used three levels of significance to test the hypothesis: 1%, 5%, and 10%. The results of hypothesis testing through internal models are as follows:

Model 1 is used to test hypotheses 1 - 2

$$CT = a + \beta 1I + \beta 2SM + \varepsilon 1$$

Model 2 is used to test hypotheses 3 - 7

$$BD = a + \beta 3I + \beta 4SM + \beta 5CT + \beta 6ICT + \beta 7SMCT + \varepsilon 2$$

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	**Coeff**	**T-stat**	**P value**	**f-square**	**Result**
Costumer Trust Model						
H1	Influencer -> Costumer Trust	0.606	2.887	0.000***	0.525	Accepted
H2	Social Media -> Costumer Trust	0.174	2.304	0.021*	0.043	Accepted
	R^2			0.513 (51,3%)		
	Adjusted R^2			0.509 (50,9%)		
Buying Decision Model						
H3	Costumer Trust → Buying Decision	0.207	2.226	0.026*	0.028	Accepted
H4	Influencer → Buying Decision	0.163	1.691	0.091*	0.015	Accepted
H5	Social Media → Buying Decision	0.301	3.818	0.000***	0.072	Accepted
H6	Influencer -> Customer Trust -> Buying Decision	0.125	2.108	0.035*	0.017	Accepted
H7	Social Media -> Customer Trust -> Buying Decision	0.036	1.405	0.160	0.003	Rejected
	R^2			0.277 (27,7%)		
	Adjusted R^2			0,259 (25,9%)		
	SRMR			0,116		

Based on Table 5 regarding hypothesis testing, the results of the analysis show that the relationship between variables in this study mostly has a significant influence. In the Customer Trust model, the influencer variable was proven to have a positive and significant influence on customer trust with a coefficient value of 0.606, a T-statistical value of 2.887, and a P-value of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. In addition, the f-square value of 0.525 indicates that influencers have a strong influence on customer trust. Thus, the H1 hypothesis is declared accepted. Furthermore, social media variables also show a positive and significant influence on customer trust. This is shown by the coefficient value of 0.174, the T-statistical value of 2.304, and the P-value of 0.021 which is smaller than 0.05. The f-square value of 0.043 indicates that social media has a relatively small impact on customer trust, but it is still significant. Therefore, the H2 hypothesis is accepted. The R^2 value of 0.513 indicates that the influencer and social media variables are able to explain customer trust by 51.3%, while the rest is influenced by other variables outside the study. An adjusted R^2 value of 0.509 indicates that the model has a fairly good level of consistency. In the Buying Decision model, customer trust variables are known to have a positive and significant effect on buying decisions. This is shown by a coefficient value of 0.207, a T-statistical value of 2.226, and a P-value of 0.026 which is smaller than 0.05. The f-square value of 0.028 shows that the influence of customer trust on buying decisions is relatively small but still significant. Thus, the H3 hypothesis is accepted. In addition, influencers also have a positive influence on purchasing decisions with a coefficient value of 0.163, a T-statistic value of 1.691, and a P-value of 0.091. Although the level of significance is at the marginal limit, these results show the influence of influencers on buying decisions with a relatively small f-square value of 0.015. Therefore, the H4 hypothesis is declared accepted. Furthermore, social media has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on buying decisions with a coefficient value of 0.301, a T-statistic value of 3.818, and a P-value of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. The f-square value of 0.072 indicates that social media has a fairly moderate influence on purchasing decisions. Thus, the H5 hypothesis is accepted. Mediation effect testing shows that influencers through customer trust have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This is shown by the coefficient value of 0.125, the T-statistic value of 2.108, and the P-value of 0.035 which is smaller than 0.05. The f-square value of 0.017 indicates that the influence of the mediation is relatively small. Therefore, the H6 hypothesis is accepted. However, social media through customer trust did not show a significant influence on purchasing decisions. This is shown by a coefficient value of 0.036, a T-statistical value of 1.405, and a P-value of 0.160 which is greater than 0.05. An f-square value of 0.003 indicates a very small influence. Therefore, the H7 hypothesis was rejected. In addition, the R^2 value in the Buying Decision model of 0.277 showed that the variables of influencers, social media, and customer trust were able to explain the Buying Decision by 27.7%, while the rest were influenced by other factors outside the research model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.259 indicates a fairly moderate level of the model's ability to explain the Buying Decision variable.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This study concludes that influencers and social media have a strategic role in influencing consumer buying decisions for Arei Outdoor Gear products, both directly and through customer trust as a mediating variable. The existence of influencers who are credible, relevant to the character of the product, and have a positive image are proven to be able to build customer trust in the brand, which further strengthens consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions. Social media also serves as an effective means of marketing communication in conveying product information, shaping brand image, and creating interactions that support the formation of long-term relationships between companies and consumers. These findings confirm that customer trust is a key element that bridges digital marketing strategies with consumer buying behavior, particularly in the context of local brands in the outdoor equipment industry. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the findings of previous research that emphasized the importance of trust in digital marketing and expand empirical studies on the role of influencers and social media in shaping consumer purchasing decisions in Indonesia (Afriani, 2021; Patrikha, 2021; Trianasari et al., 2023; Wandoko & Panggati, 2022).

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the research that has been discussed, it is recommended that Arei Outdoor Gear further optimize its digital marketing strategy by focusing on strengthening customer trust. Companies need to be more selective in choosing influencers who not only have a large number of followers, but also have credibility, experience, and value matching with the character of outdoor products so that the message conveyed feels authentic and convincing. In addition, social media management should be directed at presenting informative, educational, and consistent content, such as product reviews, user testimonials, and content based on real experiences in the outdoors, in order to build long-term relationships with consumers. In terms of theoretical development, this study indicates that customer trust has a central role in bridging the influence of influencers and social media on buying decisions, so that this variable can be further studied as the main construct in the digital marketing model of local brands. For further research, it is recommended to expand the research object on other outdoor brands or different industries, add other variables such as customer loyalty or brand image, and use different method approaches in order to provide a more comprehensive picture and enrich the treasure of research in the field of digital marketing.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the scope of research is limited to Arei Outdoor Gear consumers who are domiciled in the DKI Jakarta area, so the research results do not fully represent the behavior of consumers in other regions with different social and cultural characteristics. Second, this study only focuses on the variables of influencers, social media, customer trust, and buying decisions, so it has not been able to comprehensively capture other factors that have the potential to influence purchasing decisions, such as product quality, price, brand image, or customer loyalty. Third, the use of a quantitative approach with questionnaire instruments allows for subjectivity in respondents' answers which is influenced by the personal perceptions and experiences of each individual. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the region and number of respondents, add relevant research variables, and combine quantitative methods with qualitative approaches in order to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies on consumer behavior.

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